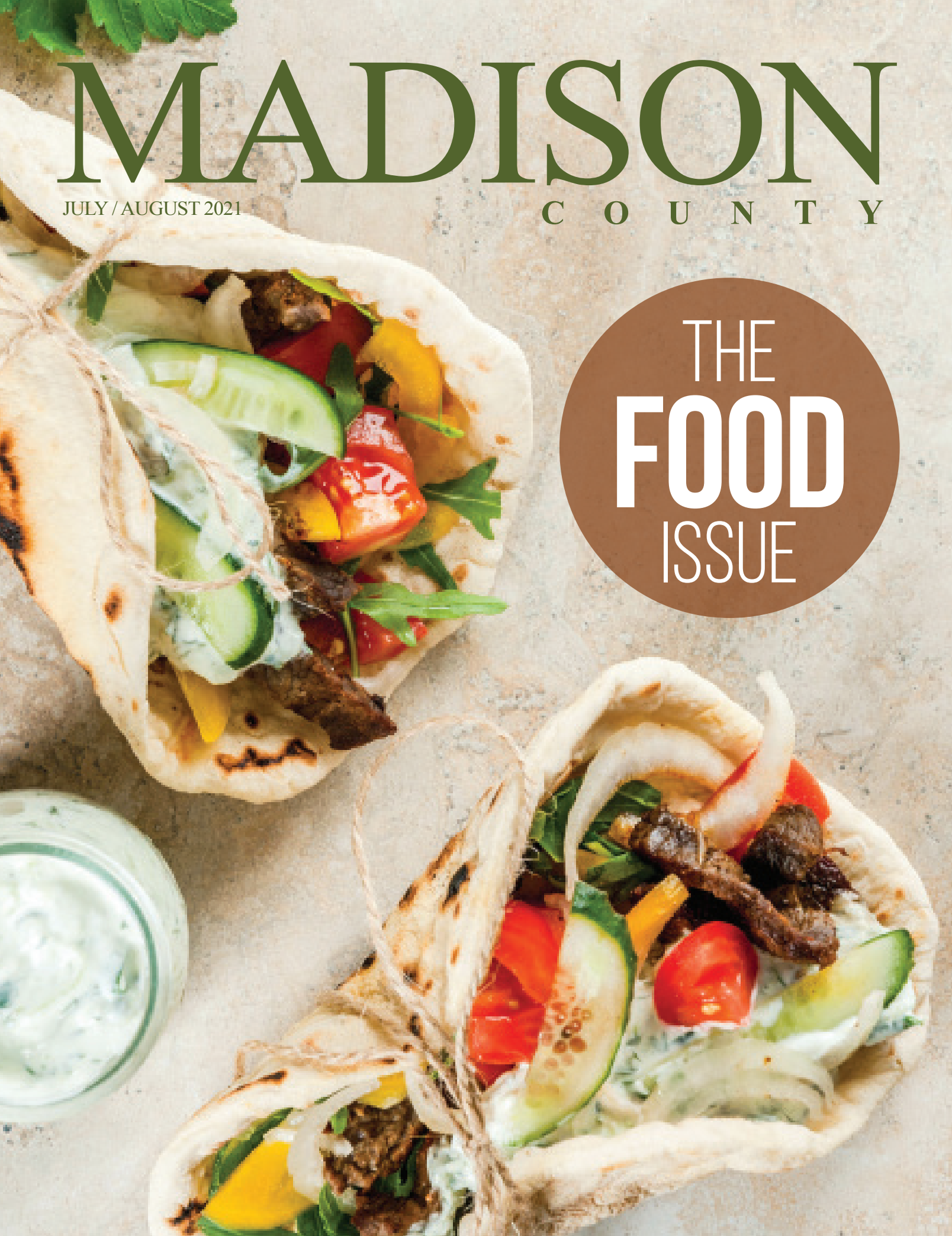


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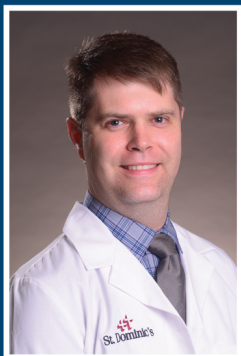
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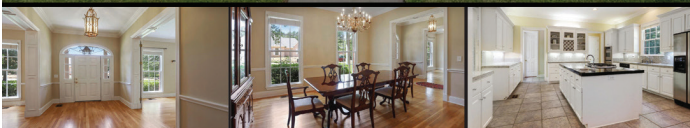
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PUBLISHED BY

The Madison County Journal

PUBLISHER

James E. Prince III

EDITOR

Scott Hawkins

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Rachel Browning Truong

CONTRIBUTING
PHOTOGRAPHERS

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Madison County Magazine is a bi-monthly supplement to the Madison County Journal designed to promote Madison County in an informative and positive manner. We welcome contributions of articles and photos; however, they will be subject to editing and availability of space and subject matter. Photographs, comments, questions, subscription requests and ad placement inquiries are invited! Return envelopes and postage must accompany all labeled materials submitted if a return is requested. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. The opinions expressed in Madison County Magazine are those of the authors or columnists and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, nor do they constitute an endorsement of products or services herein. We reserve the right to refuse any and all advertising.

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On the Cover:
Greek food can be found throughout Madison County.



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OF MIND!



TRY ADDING A LITTLE TEXTURE TO YOUR DRINK

by Duncan Dent

It is natural to focus on the flavor of a cocktail. I have no problem saying it is the most important part.

But there are other dimensions to a well-crafted cocktail that engage the senses. Some require a longer leap, sound for instance, but consider that familiar sizzle of a freshly poured glass of Coke or the wind chime-like tinkling of ice in a glass. Both are among life's simplest pleasures.

The issue we want to address is texture, or mouth feel. This may be one of the most easily manipulatable elements of a cocktail. I would imagine part of the reason you have that specific bottle of tonic water on your bar cart has something to do with the amount of fizz it offers compared to a competitor.

An even simpler experiment one can run is considering levels of beer foam. I remember in college being taught the proper way to pour a beer to avoid as much foam as possible. That might work for beer you buy 30 of at a time but when you explore beers that have been a staple of a culture for generations a fine head on the beer becomes an art in and of itself.

Until recently the Czech Republic had a monoculture around beer. There were different breweries and foreign imports but the Pilsner Urquell was king. One beer, enjoyed by the whole country, largely unchanged since it was established in 1842. One option is not always a bad thing. It led

to innovation. The Czech's had one beer, but they developed several different ways to drink it.

There are two particularly popular ways to order a Pilsner Urquell in country, I have read. The first is called "na dcakrát" which is a fairly normal pour, though the experts claim it is more carbonated and crisp and then there is "mliko" or "the milk pour." This technique is basically just a glass of beer foam and gets its name because it looks like a thick glass of white milk.

I was at Little Saigon Sandwiches and Pho off of Spillway Road the other day. I ordered a beer and the man waiting our table brought out a big 24 oz can of Sapporo, Japan's oldest beer, and a large beer mug.

"Twenty-four ounces or 32?" he asked.

I shrugged and said "32."

He dumped the beer into the mug, creating a foamy head and filling the glass to the top. I was a bit puzzled but I remembered the story I had heard about Pilsner Urquell. This unorthodox style put a smile on my face and engaged my senses. The taste and smell of the beer were more fleshed out more than I had ever experienced and the foam was a pleasurable texture against my taste buds. It was a new way to enjoy a regular beer.

With cocktails, there are many more options than a funky pour to affect the texture of a given drink. Traditionally egg whites and a vigorous shaking are enough to fluff

up a beverage.

The Ramos gin fizz may be the best example. The drink was a favorite of the kingfish himself, Sen. Huey P. Long of Louisiana. Several anecdotes have the man traveling with his own bartender and ingredients to whip up a proper gin fix on demand.

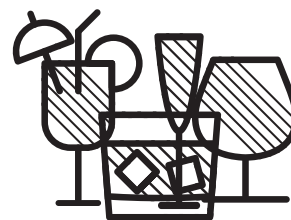
Collecting egg whites can be a fussy proposition. Cracking the egg and separating the egg whites leaves a mess and unanswered questions as to what you are going to do with the yolk.

A good friend of mine recently imparted a "hack" to me over cigars at the Country Squire in Jackson. The pandemic saw him diligently building a home bar repertoire. He said the quick not as dirty trick to whipping up frothy drinks at home is aquafaba.

Aquafaba is the juice you get from cooking chickpeas. He said he buys canned chickpeas and strains the liquid out into a container where he can then spoon some off into his cocktail shaker.

And it works. The rough conversion is one and a half tablespoons of bean juice per egg white and the rough and tumble explanation of why it works is "hell if I know." Apparently, the vegans found that it serves as a direct substitute in many recipes for egg whites.

Do the comparison yourself at home.



MAKE YOUR OWN

THE CLASSIC OPTION, THE RAMOS GIN FIZZ

2 ounces gin
 3/4 ounce simple syrup
 1/2 ounce heavy cream
 1/2 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice
 1/2 ounce freshly squeezed lime juice
 3 dashes orange flower water
 1 fresh egg white
 club soda

Combine the gin, simple syrup, heavy cream, lemon juice, lime juice, orange flower water and egg white into a cocktail shaker without ice and vigorously shake for ten seconds. Add ice and shake again until well chilled. Strain into a Collins glass. Pour a little bit of club soda back and forth between the two halves of the shaker to pick up residual cream and egg white foam and then use that to top off the drink.

THE AQUAFABA TAKE ON A CLASSIC WHISKEY SOUR

Angostura bitters
 1/2 ounce of simple syrup
 1 and 1/2 ounces of lemon juice
 2 ounces of whiskey
 1 ounce of aquafaba

Combine ingredients into a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously for 30 seconds without ice. Add ice to the shaker and shake again until well chilled. Strain into a coupe glass and serve. Garnish with maraschino cherry.





MONTGOMERY HOUSE ADDS ANOTHER CHAPTER

by Lucy Weber

Another chapter in the 169-year-old history of the spacious Montgomery House property in downtown Madison is being written as a city park and botanical garden take shape, part of the historic city center that will include planned residential and commercial developments, a big vision of Mayor Mary Hawkins-Butler's for decades.

The landmark property started out as a small pioneer structure in 1852 in the then-sparsely settled region, but by 1898 had been transformed into a charming country cottage.

The city of Madison owns the house and spacious grounds now. "There is something about this place," Hawkins-Butler said recently at the groundbreaking for what will become the Madison Station Botanical Garden. "These grounds are very special."

Not a lot is known about the early days of the property, but tucked away along a winding drive on a small hill with a spacious yard across from Madison United Methodist Church on Main Street, the Montgomery House can go unnoticed.

The forerunner of the magnificent white country cottage was a simple two-room, dogtrot dwelling.

Incidentally, the unknown builder wasn't the first in the area. Just down the way and closer to Main Street is a larger house built circa 1840 by Irish immigrant John Curran. That house is the oldest surviving structure in Madison and is listed as the Curran House on the National Register of Historic Places.

Less than a quarter-mile east, the early settlers no doubt watched construction of the Illinois Central Railroad that brought

big changes to the area in the way of commerce at what would become Madison Station. The tracks were finished in 1856 when trains started stopping in the area. The railroad signaled progress as more settlers and businesses quickly followed that same year. Strawberries were a big commodity.

The first known owner of the Montgomery House wasn't even a Montgomery. He was Thomas Nicholson Jones, a prominent businessman. Jones, born in 1855, and his wife, Hugh Lena Jones, born in 1865, were married in 1883.

Thomas Nicholson Jones was one of the first three aldermen of the newly chartered town of Madison in 1898 and was the first president of the new Bank of Madison in 1901.

Jones is the reason the picturesque one-story frame house looks the way it does today. The house has had no major structural changes since 1898 when Jones finished the additions and enhancements more than 100 years ago.

The much grander house that resulted is historically significant as one of the few remaining examples of late vernacular Goth architecture from the Gothic Revival Movement in Madison County. The house is considered a visible and valuable link in the state's history of architecture of that period.

The architecture reflects the prosperity in Madison Station at the time. The Madison Station area was one of the richest farming sections of the entire state, making the community in the late 1800s a railroad shipping center that brought prosperity. A new style of architecture, Gothic Revival, was admired by the wealthy landowners such as Jones who were influenced by a popular book "The Architecture of Country Houses" written in 1850 by A.J. Downing, one of the country's premier landscape architects.

An impressive façade, inspired by the book, was attached to the front of the initial structure, doubling the size of the house to four large rooms on either side of an enclosed center hall. The overall plan of the house, built with natural materials of heart pine and cypress, is one of simplicity and symmetry. The entrance is set off by one of Downing's trademarks, a wide gallery extending across the front.

In 1910, both Jones and his wife died, and the house was inherited by their relatives in the Montgomery family, in whose possession it remained until the city purchased the property in 2019. Additions were made on the back of the house in the 1900s without destroying the dignity of the historic property.

The significance of the architecture is the reason the home is listed on the National Register. Hugh C. Montgomery and his wife Faye, the last residents of the house, were the driving force behind that nomination for the national distinction.

Hugh Montgomery grew up in the house with his father Hugh C. Montgomery Sr. and his mother Mattie. Montgomery Sr. died in 1958 and Mattie Montgomery died in 1977. Faye and Hugh Montgomery married in 1966 but didn't move to the Madison property until about 1995.

"I always wanted to move up here. I loved it here but Hugh grew up here and he did not want to go back to a house where you had to build a fire for warmth," she said.

When they did move in, Faye Montgomery said she worked to make the house reflect its history. "You need to let something

Madison's history.

The city hosted events and special functions there. It was the location of the first city festival. The city seal was unveiled there. U.S. senators and Miss Americas have been entertained at Montgomery House.

The property is expected to be filled with the beauty and the fragrances of roses, azaleas, hydrangeas, gardenias, daffodils, lilies and much more. A walking trail will meander through various small gardens bursting with colors and textures on the front lawn. Roses will fill one of the gardens around a gazebo. Dogwoods and camellias will be featured in another, and ornamentals and hollies in another.

"Can you imagine when you come down Main Street and see that it's preserved?" asked Mayor Hawkins-Butler.



be true to itself and find the beauty there," she said. "This started life as a grand house. The folklore that's been repeated is that it was built for a bride. It had the finest wallpapers, hand-grained woodwork. It had to be breath-taking when it was new."

Hugh died in 2018 and Faye decided to sell the house to the city because of the mayor's commitment to preserving the house and its history. "The main thing was to know it would be saved, and that appealed to me," she said.

At the groundbreaking for the botanical garden, Hawkins-Butler said the property is "one of the best things to happen in Madison. This house is part of the very heartbeat of Madison."

The Montgomery House, in the years before the city purchased it, played a role in

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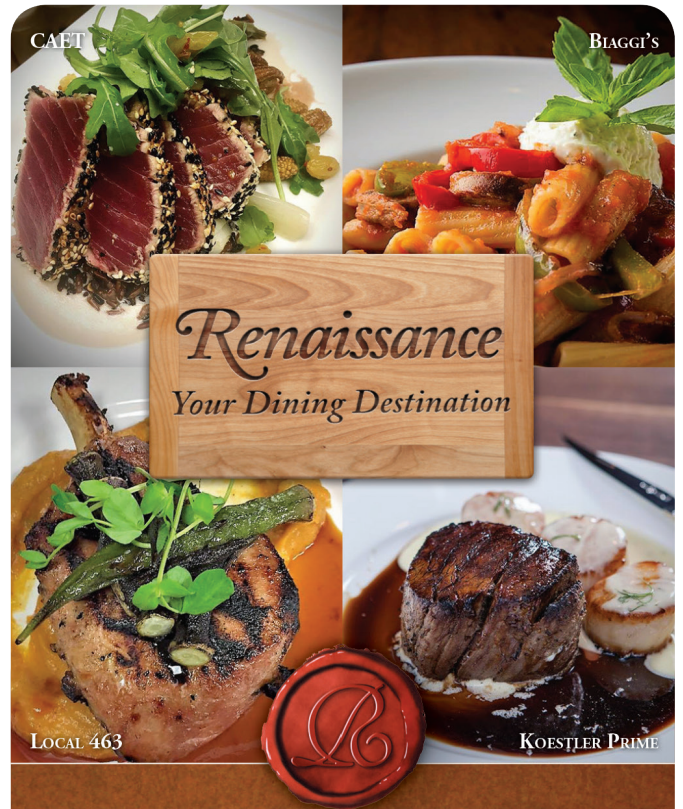
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Vasilios Manager
Shannon Corban



The aromatic flavors of Greek-Mediterranean cuisine have wafted through Vasilios' front doors for nearly three decades — the scent of freshly sautéed seafood and herbs that have solicited customers through many trials in the restaurant industry.

The Madison restaurant is still run by the Nikolas family with recipes developed in their own kitchen.

"All the Greeks love family dinners," Chef Soula Nikolas said. "They'd come over and cook together...That's what food is all about, bringing the family together."

She founded the restaurant with her husband Vasilio Nikolas in 1994 after she moved to the U.S., adding to the many Greek families who have carved out a life serving delicious dishes in the heart of the Magnolia State.

Vasilios, 828 U.S. 51, Madison, is one of several Greek restaurants in Madison County and others such as Krilakis Greek Gyros and Salads, at 207 W. Jackson St. Suite D in Old Towne Ridgeland, and YiaYia's at 587 U.S. 51 Suite J in Ridgeland.

Greeks have established thriving communities in coastal states such as Florida and New York, which is still the largest collection of Greek immigrants in the U.S. The first Greek consulate was founded in New Orleans in the 1860s. But thousands more immigrated in two waves from 1900 until 1924 to answer industrial labor demands from 1960 until the 1980s.

Despite the large influx into North America, Mississippi is only host to a fraction of the nation's Greek-born immigrants. By 1910, only 117 Greeks called Mississippi their home and that number only grew to 378 by 1960, as

documented by the Mississippi Encyclopedia. But that small percentage was primary based in central Mississippi and has slowly increased to make a big impact.

Researchers and culinary historians have documented the Greek immigrants' impact on the area and their success. Iconic restaurants in the Jackson area include the Mayflower Café, Primos Café and Bill's Greek Tavern, to name a few originals.

"These families were very industrious," said Malcolm White, longtime Jackson restaurateur and business owner.

Though many of those restaurants serve more typical American food such as hamburgers and modern "brunch" staples, White said many of the signature seafood dishes still harken to their roots.

Diners at other restaurants may be totally unaware when they consume a Greek-influenced recipe.

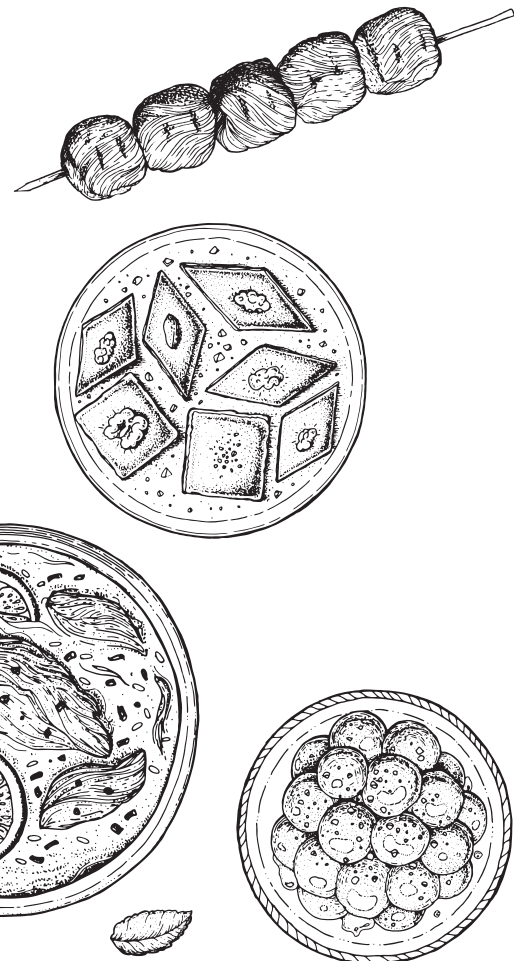
The tangy, orange-colored dipping condiment known as "comeback sauce" is derived from the yogurt-based Tzatziki sauce. The origin has been credited to Alex Dennergy and Jackson restaurant, The Rotisserie.

"Almost every restaurant in Jackson serves comeback sauce," White said.

What stands out about Vasilios is that it is one of the few Greek establishments that have consistently served traditional Greek fare. The menu has evolved moderately in the past decades.

"Everything here is homemade," Nikolas said with pride.

The most popular items have always been the Gyros, desserts and seafood.



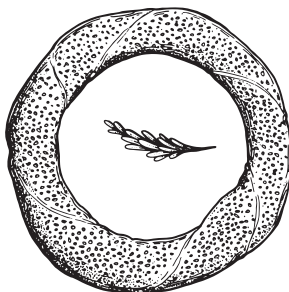
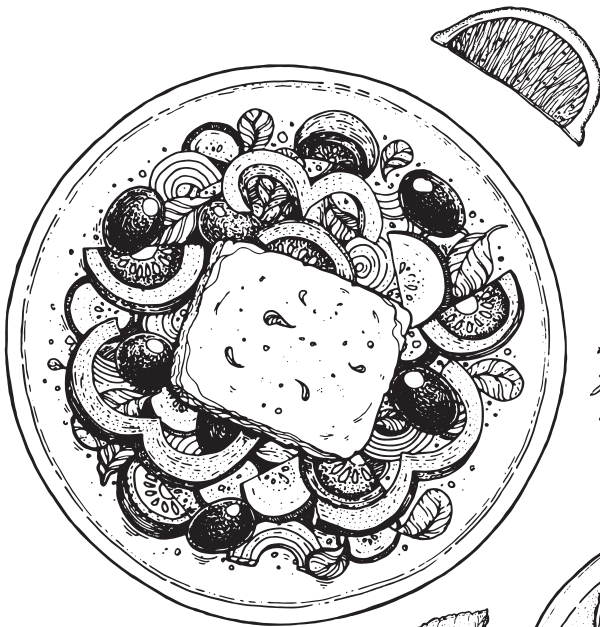
VASILIOS' THALASINNO SEAFOOD STEW OVER RICE

Ingredients:

1/2 onion
Seasoning
2 bay leaves
1/4 olive oil
8 Tbs butter (divided)
Handful of chopped parsley
1 cup dry Chardonnay
1 cup water
1 Tbs chicken base
3 Tbs All-purpose flour
56 shrimp
72 scallops
1/2 pound of crabmeat
Cooked white rice
Optional: Lemon

Directions:

1. Prepare adequate rice portions as directed.
2. Chop and sauté the onion in the olive oil in a large skillet. Add in the shrimp, scallops, crabmeat, bay leaves, half of the butter, chopped parsley, seasoning and the Chardonnay and cook until seafood is done. Set aside.
3. Melt butter in a deep pan on the stovetop. Add the flour and stir constantly until the mixture thickens and turns light brown. Slowly whisk in the water and chicken base and stir until combined.
4. Carefully combine both pans until ingredients meld well.
5. Serve over rice with lemon slices and extra parsley sprigs for a garnish.



Many recipes come from Soula Nikolas' mother and grandmother's repertoire, which she learned while growing up in the seaside community of Kavala. Nikolas and her late son, Nick, developed the popular Thalassinno dish. The name comes from the Greek "Thalassa," which translates to "sea."

Any Greek seasoning can work for the dish. Many Greek blends include dill, oregano and mint, which work fine.

Nikolas said Tony Chachere's will also work.

Thalassinno does not require any complicated techniques, but seafood should be fresh and cooked thoroughly. Shrimp are bright pink when cooked properly. Scallops are cooked well when opaque and lightly seared. If using a thermometer, shellfish must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 145°F for 15 seconds and scallops are perfectly cooked when their centers reach 115 degrees.

Look at the appearance of the scallops. They become opaque when cooked through. If you're pan-frying them, they should be slightly browned.

The dish, and others, kept Vasilios' customer base consistent enough to weather the pandemic when the dining area shut down and served curbside exclusively.

"We have customers come in repeatedly throughout the day sometimes. Others have been coming here for over 27 years," Nikolas said. "They're very nice people, and that's what we like."

Of course, not every recipe needs to be from someone's family history to be delicious.

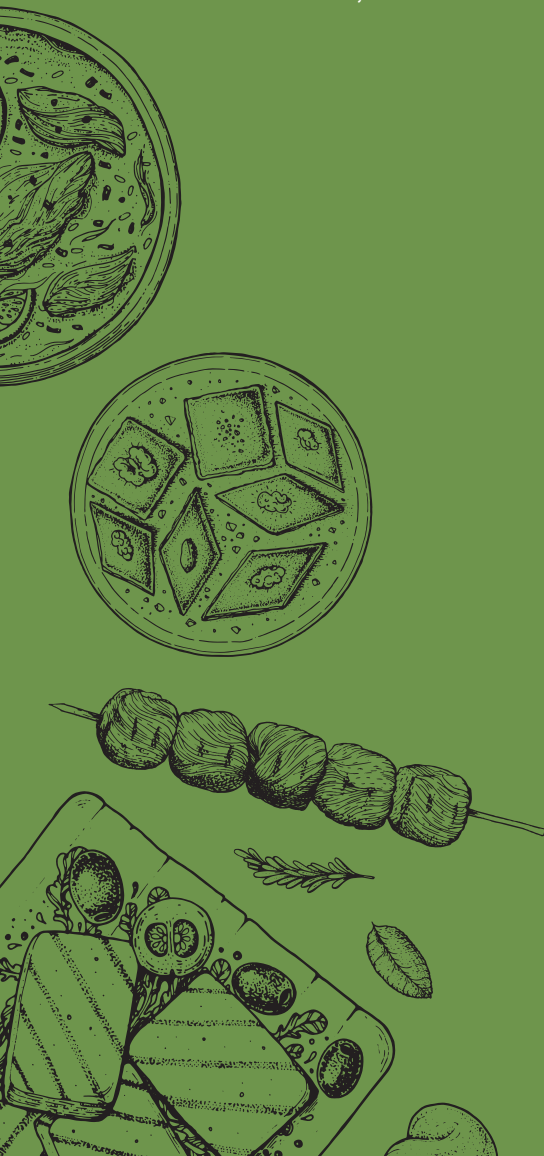
KRILAKIS' TZATZIKI SAUCE:

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of Greek God's plain, traditional yogurt
- 1 1/2 cup of blended cucumber
- 1 medium-sized garlic clove
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients and mix well.
 2. Adjust salt and garlic to taste.
 3. Serve cold.
- * Can be stored in the fridge covered for several days.



Restaurateur Drew Creel opened Krilakis Greek Gyros and Salads in Ridgeland in August 2011. Although he has no Greek heritage, Creel spent many years in Athens with his missionary parents.

"I grew up eating the food," Creel said. "My best friends are still in Greece."

He still remembers riding his bicycle through the street markets of Athens where he spent summers selling tourist trinkets down the hill from the Acropolis, an ancient cityscape that housed the temple of Athena, the Parthenon.

Creel started the restaurant after years of entrepreneurship and coaching basketball. He moved to the area after his brother-in-law invited him to coach at a nearby Christian school.

The restaurant's name "Krilakis" is what his Athenian neighbors nicknamed his father. It is a play on his last name to make it more Greek-sounding.

Originally, Creel and his family started the restaurant in Byram, but moved to Madison County just two years later to expand. Since then, Creel said the customer base has only grown.

"It just made sense for us," Creel said. "We've grown tremendously over the years."

Not only does Creel get to introduce residents to the Greek food he grew up loving, but he also gets to socialize with Greeks who live nearby.

Creel still speaks fluent Greek and often calls Athens to catch up with old friends. So when Greek Madison County residents come by, they have been known to order in their native language directly from Creel.

"I love their culture. To me, it seems more laidback," Creel said.

Creel lived in Athens until he was 21. He moved back to the U.S. and went to college before entering the workforce and getting married.

Creel quoted one of his favorite Greek sayings: "Americans live to work and Greeks work to live."

Whenever he went to visit Athens, he felt like he left the rat race behind.

"It was like I was getting out of that wheel," he said.

Now that he has steadily worked with his family in the restaurant, he loves to share the culture that shaped his youth.

"There's nothing I didn't like about Greece. I'm just happy now to cook the food...All of the food is tremendous. It doesn't matter what they're cooking," Creel said.

Creel said he loves the way Greeks use non-salt seasonings such as lemon juice, garlic and herbs to spice up the dishes.

"You don't have to add salt to it...and that's the way we serve it here," Creel said.

The most popular dishes at Krilakis are their gyros, salads and burgers. Creel sells a standard American hamburger but he has also tweaked some recipes to make them more Mediterranean such as the Feta burger.

Creel also sells a lot of his signature Tzatziki sauce, which he makes from scratch by the gallon each week. It is a popular Greek sauce for a multitude of dishes and sides as well as at Krilakis.

"We just try to deliver fresh and tasty food every day," he said. "That's what we have been doing for 10 years and it has worked for us."



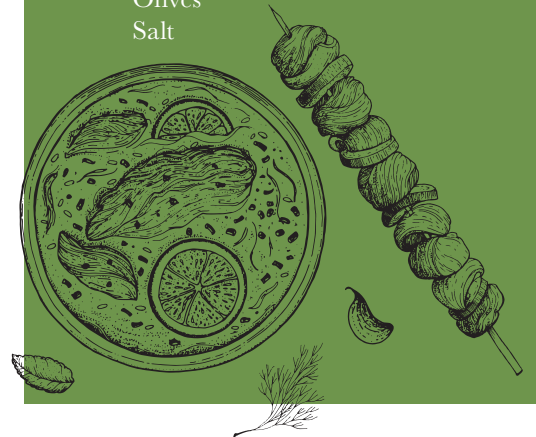
Drew Creel

Despina (Yia Yia) and
Stefano Mangafakis



YIAYIA'S XORIATIKI — PROVINCIAL SALAD

Sliced tomato
Green peppers
Cucumbers
Feta cheese
Extra virgin olive oil
Basil or mint
Oregano
Red onions
Scallions
Anchovies (optional)
Pepperoncini
Olives
Salt



Yiayia's Greek Kitchen imports its olive oil from Greece and the recipes were learned on the island of Rhodes.

"I'm really lucky to open this business," said Despina Mangafakis, "because the hospitality here is the most wonderful thing. It reminds me of the little village I grew up in. We left our doors open, we greeted everyone, and that's what I've found here."

Started in 2017, Yiayia's has served the Madison County area with authentic Greek cuisine inspired by Mangafakis' hometown of Gennadi. The restaurant was conceived after Mangafakis chose to move to Ridgeland to follow her two beloved grandsons, Stefano and Niko, who help with the restaurant. Yiayia is Greek for grandmother, and everyone in the restaurant, waitstaff and grandchildren alike, refer to Mangafakis as "Yiayia."

Mangafakis talks fondly of Gennadi, a fishing village located on the island of Rhodes in Greece. She grew up five minutes from the water and recalls how, in her neighborhood, communal generosity was part of the local cul-

ture. Ridgeland reminds her of her home.

As such, she feels strongly about Yiayia's authenticity as a Greek restaurant. Fresh products are at the center of Yiayia's success. The restaurant's extra virgin olive oil is delivered straight from Greece. The feta cheese has to meet Mangafakis's standards. The tzatziki sauce relies on herbs chosen specifically by Mangafakis as taught to her by her family.

Yiayia's is very much a family endeavor. The restaurant's website was crafted by Yiayia's son, Steven. There, the menu features the Greek deific pantheon, with gods such as Zeus and Poseidon cleverly indicating the gyro and fish and chips dishes.

"People surprised me here because they already knew the Greek myths," Mangafakis said. She points to the local appreciation for Greek culture, food, and mythology as reasons for Yiayia's success, but also the word-of-mouth that has allowed Yiayia's to thrive. The relationship between restaurant and patron has given Yiayia's the support it needed to survive during unforeseen circumstances.

Despite the neverending push to provide these mythical dishes, Mangafakis finds it hard to be tired after a long day's work, because of how wonderful her customers are. "There is nothing to complain about," she said.

Their most popular dish is the lunch menu gyro with fries and a drink, better known as the Zeus; the Moussaka, oven-baked layers of potatoes, eggplant, ground beef and homemade béchamel cream; and the Pastitsio, oven-baked Greek pasta also layered with ground beef and home-made béchamel cream.

Mangafakis's personal favorite dish is the Meze Platter, which includes fried meatballs Pitaroudia, cheese pie, spinach pie, Dolmadakia, cucumber sauce, feta cheese, olives, and pita bread.

Yiayia's special Greek salad is what Mangafakis considers to be the definitive Greek salad and there is strictly no lettuce involved. This provincial recipe works as a great summer salad option and is quite popular in the restaurant.



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FRIDAY NIGHT PORCH PARTY

By Duncan Dent

Lucy, Lou, Jack, Jay, Ellen,
and Anne Scott Morgan

There is something about the way the words “Friday night” roll off the tongue that evokes a little excitement in most people. For many people, it signals the end of the workweek and an excuse to unwind. For Jay Morgan, his family and his growing circle of friends it means “Porch party.”

Every Friday night, for about 25 years, Jay Morgan has prepared a feast. He lives in Reunion with his wife, Lou, where they host a weekly get-together that is simply known as the “Friday Night porch Party” or FNPP for short. Jay loves cooking for a crowd. Jay crafts a spread meant to be indulged. He fills his kitchen counter with what sometimes seems like an endless number of finger foods piled high on plastic plates. Jay prides himself on the comfort food he serves.

“We aren’t exactly serving steak and lobster,” Jay said.

His prime concern is that everyone has enough. An example: One night in May Jay had set up a load your own mashed potatoes bar. Some guests were running late and the mashed potatoes were going fast. When some of the lollygaggers finally showed up, Jay had already solved the problem. He whipped a batch of cheese grits.

The guests were then able to load up their plates with cheese grits, some leftover mashed potatoes and all the fixings one could imagine. A brief list includes sausage, chicken nuggets, roasted garlic, onions, cheese and more.

“I like to see how people make their plate,” Jay said, always the attentive host.

A long-time FNPP veteran Amy Dear said she met the Morgans when she first moved to Reunion in 2005. She said their children met on the playground and they were quickly invited to FNPP that week.

“We do life together,” Dear said.

Dear said she and her family have vacationed with the Morgans and they always tailgate Ole Miss games together. Her family has recently moved back to Madison





County from Oxford, where she said they would frequently host FNPP in Oxford.

“Jay is one of a kind,” Dear said. “He loves to serve people and doesn’t expect anything. He loves people, big.”

Jay said the party started while he and his family lived in Belzoni. They had a big family so they did not get invited out much. That would serve as an excuse to have people over. The Morgans continued the tradition when they moved to Reunion just over 15 years ago. Jay said some weeks are as small as six or eight people but with a core group that now includes about a dozen families, Jay regularly feeds 25 people and has seen more than 50 people on his porch before.

Jay said he found a love for cooking when he was young. He got his first job at the Ward’s in Columbia when he was maybe 14 years old.

“Food is my love language,” Jay Morgan said. “If I had gone with my heart I probably would have gone into the food industry somehow.”

(As if a vibrant Instagram account and website and feeding dozens of people every week isn’t “in the industry.”)

Morgan continued his food education at the University of Mississippi. Though he studied business, he spent a lot of his free time taking recipe instructions from his mother over the phone.

After he graduated in 1990 he moved to Belzoni where he started his insurance business and made friends with Lou’s family. He said he got to know her brother Andy and became a frequent dinner guest including one night when Lou was in town.

“I went to dinner with her family and she was there and that was all she wrote,” Jay Morgan said.

Feeding a dozen people can be a lot of work but Morgan said he thinks of it the way someone else might think of golf or fishing.

“It is a hobby for me like people play golf,” Jay said. “I can spend all day in the

kitchen on vacation.”

To extend the golf analogy, Jay thinks of a high-end dutch oven he had been eyeing. His mind was jumping to recipes he could make but said the price tag was a little higher than he would like before it hit him that he knew people that would buy a top-of-the-line golf club at the drop of a hat because it brings them pleasure.

“This is going to last me 25 years,” Jay Morgan said.

And he doesn’t mind the preparation either. In his kitchen with his apron on and his favorite playlist, “Cooking Dinner with Bac” on Spotify, Jay said he can really lose himself.

“My wife says chopping is my therapy,” Jay said.

The food bug has spread to the Morgan children as well. Jay said they can hold long conversations on the topic and the family group chat is usually full of pictures of plates.

He has three daughters and a son. Anne Scott, the oldest, is an accountant for the Madison County School District. Lucy recently took a job as a teacher at Oxford Elementary. Ellen is a senior at Ole Miss and “wants a cooking empire.” She is working on getting a baking business started and already has a reputation for her cookies and cakes. The youngest, Jack, is a senior at Madison Central and works as manager at Georgia Blue.

Last June, Ellen told her dad she had made him an Instagram account. Jay began to play with the app on his phone, posting pictures of his food and showing off the groups of friends sitting on his big wrap-around porch.

He now enjoys talking to his friends and fans on Instagram live.

The internet has been a great way for Jay to share ideas and get new ones. Recently he said a fan sent him a recipe for fried avocados he has been wanting to try. Fans can search for recipes on his website.





FRIDAY NIGHT PORCH PARTY

At Fridaynightporchparty.com fans can take a whack at Jay's recipes. A popular one includes his chicken nuggets. He said when his children were growing up they were always asking for Chick-fil-A. He said, "I can master this recipe." Jay said the results are not an imitation but have become a crowd-pleaser.

"I never got it exactly right, but I did create a recipe that makes my family and my friends very happy," Jay writes on his website. "I can visibly see joy in the eyes of my Friday Night Porch Party peeps when they see my chicken nuggets on the bar. That makes me happy."

When asked if he had one tip he would like to pass on that has changed the way he cooks, he thought for a minute and shared a technique for cooking rice. He said he picked it up from Lou's family's housekeeper. It is as simple as "boils rice like pasta." He said cooking rice in a pot with salted water and then drained into a colander is a never-fail trick for perfect rice.

"It is a game-changer," Jay said. "It is the only way I cook rice now."





Food is Love

By Scott Hawkins



Food is love is not only a common refrain at the Farmer's Table Cooking School, it also is a way of life exemplified by the school's Executive Chef Connor Wolf.

Wolf heads up the Farmer's Table Cooking School cofounded by Bridget Engle seven years ago this December in the town of Livingston at Mississippi 463 and Mississippi 22 in Madison County.

"He has so much love for food," Engle said. "That is what we say, 'Food is love.' It is contagious."

On a recent blue-sky sunny Thursday afternoon hundreds of people strolled the streets of Livingston, some sitting on the porch of the town bar, others perusing the food trucks, food stands, produce stands and arts and crafts stands set up in the shade of giant trees on the town square for the first of the year's Livingston Spring Markets.

Wolf worked the Farmer's Table booth frying batches of fresh Gulf shrimp to make po-boys with fresh-cut French fries on the side for hungry customers who lined up at the booth.

"I love his cooking," said Starry Love of Bolton who has been driving over for the Livingston Spring every Thursday during the spring for years to enjoy Wolf's cooking. "I love his cooking. The pulled pork is excellent."

The shrimp po-boy also met with Love's approval, she said.

"I am a fan," Love said.

Wolf joined the Farmer's Table Cooking School as executive chef in August 2017, where he creates all menus for cooking demonstrations, classes and catering events.

For cooking classes, Wolf said he teaches students to prepare their own meals. He works with local farmers to supply seasonal produce for menu planning.

"You come in, we've got beer, wine, sangria that are offered whenever you come through the door and we'll have a little appetizer and then we start cooking," Wolf said of the cooking class experience. "It will either be a soup or a salad. Then we make a main entrée and a dessert and you make it all from start to finish. Then take a seat and eat what you created."

The meal preparation portion of the class usually takes about an hour, Wolf said.

"The main purpose of this is making people comfortable in the kitchen, and I like seeing people learn new things like the proper way to dice an onion or break down a bell pepper or sear scallops," Wolf said. "People think they know the correct way and the proper way to do it and then they come here and I just say I make cooking



easier for people. I make them more comfortable in their own kitchen.”

A recent cooking class walked participants through preparing grilled redfish served over cucumber, heirloom tomato and shallot Israeli couscous and garlic roasted green beans and lemon butter sauce with arugula salad with sliced summer peaches, diced red onions, roasted corn, feta cheese and toasted pinenuts dressed with a lemon vinaigrette lemon icebox pie with toasted meringue topping and sliced almonds. The admission price was \$99.

Wolf has spent years honing his craft, having earned an associates degree in culinary arts at Le Cordon Bleu School of Culinary Arts Miami Florida in 2014 and having worked as a line cook at Swine in Coral Gables, Florida, in 2013-2014, as a line cook under Derek Emerson at Walker's Drive In, Jackson, Local 463 and Caet, 2014-2015, before working as a sous chef at Walker's Drive In 2015 to 2017.

“Some people can be intimidated by certain dishes or recipes or using a certain product and then we give people the chance to come out here and experiment and try something new and make them feel a little more at home in their own kitchen, too,” Wolf said of the cooking school classes.

Wolf said he not only loves teaching people proper cooking techniques but also loves feeding people.

“I love cooking for people and cooking with them,” Wolf said. “When I was growing up my mother would always say three words, and it seems very cliché nowadays but the idea that food is love sort of rings true to me. I’ve sort of built my life and my career around those three words.”

Engle said that love of cooking for and feeding people makes Wolf a natural for teaching cooking classes.

“He was working for Derek at Walker's and at Local and Caet and I had him come out and teach, do a guest chef and I knew, he was literally a duck to water, this is what he was made to do for now,” Engle said. “He will be able to do great things. ... He is a very, very good chef. I would probably say one of the top three chefs in the Jackson area.”

Wolf said he also loves meeting people from different walks of life, different backgrounds or religions and ethnicities bond over food.

“We all have one thing in common, we all really enjoy food,” Wolf said. “We have to have it and to see strangers come in here and walk through these doors and gather around the dinner table and share experiences and tell stories and cook hand in

hand, there’s really no greater thing to see.”

While each class is a standalone experience Wolf said many students come back for more classes.

The Farmer’s Table Cooking School’s classroom is well-equipped for the experience as well with rows of four tables each equipped for four students to accommodate 16 students per class and cooking equipment including Viking ranges, Viking grills outside, mixers and blenders. Students learn knife skills and proper techniques for frying, baking, sauteeing and grilling.

The Farmer’s Table Cooking School also offers special classes including private lessons and classes for up to some 25 students. The school also recently had children’s classes.

“Once it gets past that point we either do seated dinners or I do demonstrations where we set up demo style,” Wolf said. “People just set up in front of me at the kitchen bar and I may have a little TV screen camera putting me up there and I show them how to

make a couple of different things and they get to learn about it and also enjoy cooking without having to chop, slice or dice. That is another option as well.”

Wolf said people do not understand how powerful the food bonding experience can be.

“The one thing that I do and I end every class with is to reenforce and it is not just the basis of the cooking school but it is the main reason that I do it is the idea that food is love,” Wolf said. “People don’t understand how powerful it can be whether it is something so small like everybody seems to give food to families if there is a loved one that has passed or there is a baby that is born. Everybody is always dropping off food that makes you feel good. You know it really does, but whether it is something super small like grabbing them a Hershey bar or dropping off a pint of ice cream or bringing a pint of ice cream home to your pregnant spouse. Something so small can make such an impact.”





BIG RED

A MEMBER OF THE TINSLEY FAMILY
FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS



Big Red has been in the Tinsley family for as long as any of the Tinsleys can remember.

“Dad used it to haul timber,” said Billy Tinsley of the 1948 F5 Ford truck his father, the late-Plez Tinsley Sr., obtained in 1956.

Tinsley of Madison said the truck has been around so long it is almost considered a member of the family.

His father, Plez Tinsley Sr., bought the 1948 F5 Ford candy apple red flat-bed truck in 1956.

“I don’t know if he purchased it or traded for it,” said Billy, who was only about a year old at the time and the second of the four children of Plez and Edna Tinsley of Philadelphia in Neshoba County. Billy has been in real estate in Madison for decades.

The truck is a step up from a regular pickup truck, and Big Red is a real workhorse with a bigger frame than a regular pickup and a V8 flathead engine with a four on the floor. Big Red is decked out with a flatbed and a large wench on a boom that is perfect for hauling timber or pulling other vehicles out of jams and towing them.

Billy and his brother Mike remember their Dad being a bit of a prankster and having a recurring prop gag.

“Dad had a telephone receiver that was on a chord that he kept in his glove compartment,” Mike said. “He would go through town like he was talking on the phone. He said one day you will be able to have a phone in your car or truck.”

While Plez Sr. never used Big Red commercially, Billy said he did make money off of the big truck’s wench — on at least one occasion he recalls with a son-in-law.

“My brother-in-law Rex (Rounsaville) that is married to my sister, he got his pickup truck stuck behind his house and the truck is an old wrecker truck so it has a wench on it,” Billy said. “He called my Dad to come pull him out of the mud so my Dad went over there. He hooks the wench up underneath it and he walks back over to the truck and he doesn’t do anything. He just kind of folds his arms and Rex says, ‘Go ahead and pull it out,’ and my Dad held out his hand and said, ‘That’ll be \$20.’ We laugh about that. He did pull him out. He had him in a jam. He hooked the wench to him and all of that.”

Rex did give Plez the \$20.

Because of such fond memories of Plez and Big Red, Billy and Mike, who both followed in their Dad’s footsteps in real estate, could not part with Big Red when they jointly inherited the truck after Plez died in 1995.

After inheriting the truck the brothers would occasionally drive Big Red to keep it running and in operation but about three years ago they decided Big Red needed some work.

“It was in about average shape,” Billy said. “We had a (restoration) where they took the whole body off it and sanded it down and repaired any rusted metal and then painted

it. It has got an incredible paint job on it. It is red. That was the original color. That’s why we always called it ‘Big Red.’”

Billy said the brothers split the bill that he estimated to be about \$20,000 total and the work took approximately six to nine months to complete.

Billy said the decision to restore Big Red was not a tough one to make.

“I have got an older brother Plez and my sister Jo Ann, and when we were settling up things decided who wanted what and they didn’t really want to put the money into it,” Billy said. “So me and my brother Mike fixed it up.”

Their younger sister Jo Ann Tinsley-Rounsaville said she is glad the brothers fixed up Big Red.

“I am so proud,” she said. “When they approached me about it they decided they wanted to do it and the funny thing, Daddy always said, ‘Don’t ever be partners, especially with family.’ I took Daddy’s advice and opted out. It is wonderful. I’m proud that they did it, and I know that Daddy would be tickled.”

Jo Ann said she remembers as a teenager their Dad taking the truck to the Neshoba County Fair.

“Of course when we were teenagers, we were just so embarrassed that he was going to do that,” Jo Ann said. “He would put a fake telephone in it and he would say, ‘One day there are going to be phones in cars,’ and he would drive around the race track



Edna and Plez Tinsley stand beside Big Red in approximately 1989 with grandchildren Bronwen Tinsley, then 4, and Tyler Rounsaville, then 6, in the bed of the truck.

with that phone to his ear and I thought we would die.”

Jo Ann said she later came to respect her father and was no longer embarrassed by him.

“I stopped that at the age of about 20 when I decided he was a lot smarter than what we gave him credit for after about three of us were in college and my oldest brother was in med school at the same time,” she said. “Daddy didn’t borrow a dime. He just always worked ... but they saved for our educations and paid for it and I’m very proud of where I came from.”

Even before the restoration, Mike said they got a lot of offers from people wanting to buy Big Red. Doing the restoration took a bit of research, too, Billy said, adding parts can be a bit difficult to find.

“There is a guy up in Connecticut that specializes in big trucks like that,” Billy said. “Having the internet makes it a lot easier to get information.”

Billy and Mike both said they would like

to add power steering to Big Red because driving without power steering is tough.

“It takes both hands on the steering wheel and your feet have got to be quick to get to the clutch,” said Mike, who does most of the driving. “It is a four-speed. It has got a real low gear that we call grandmaw, and it has got three others. I think the top speed is about 45 or 50 mph. It has got, I think, around 83,000, actual miles on it. It has a pretty simple motor.”

Power steering is proving to be difficult to obtain for Big Red.

“We’re trying to find out how to get power steering on it now,” Mike said. “I think that is a no-go on that.”

Billy said his research indicates you cannot get a power steering kit for a truck the size of Big Red.

“I kept searching this website, and it said you need to put ‘Armstrong power steering’ on it,” Billy said. “I didn’t know what that meant. These old guys know, and I’m old too, but what is Armstrong?”

Billy said he finally found out what Armstrong power steering is.

“What they are talking about is putting one of those balls on the steering wheel to turn the steering wheel with,” Billy said. “Yeah, that’s Armstrong. I actually put one on there for my brother. I didn’t have it tight enough. It was coming loose. He was trying to use it.”

Both brothers agreed the restoration was more about preserving family history than about any monetary value of Big Red.

“It has been in our family 60-something years,” Mike said.

Billy and Mike agreed they hope Big Red stays in the family.

“It is preserving family history for my kids and also my nieces and nephews in the future,” Billy said.

In the meantime, Billy said he enjoys going to car shows and looking at other vintage and antique cars and hot rods. He favors muscle cars from the 1970s era of his youth.

“It doesn’t fall into that category,” Billy said of Big Red. “It is more like a family tradition type of deal vs. an interest in older cars. I like older cars, but I’m not one of those older car nuts. I like to go see them but it’s not the end of the world.”

Billy said he goes to Cruisin’ The Coast on the Mississippi Gulf Coast most years but would not try to take Big Red because of the difficulty getting it there.

The brothers agreed, however, that they will take Big Red to the car show on the Sunday of the Neshoba County Fair this year. Big Red has been there before.

“We will get it out there,” Mike said. “We put rocking chairs on it.”

Billy agreed.

“We are going to take it out there this year,” Billy said. “That’s close enough for us to take it to a car show.”

Jo Ann is hoping they can get a picture of all of Poppa’s great-grandchildren at the Fair. “It would be a great time to do that. He would be tickled to death,” she said.



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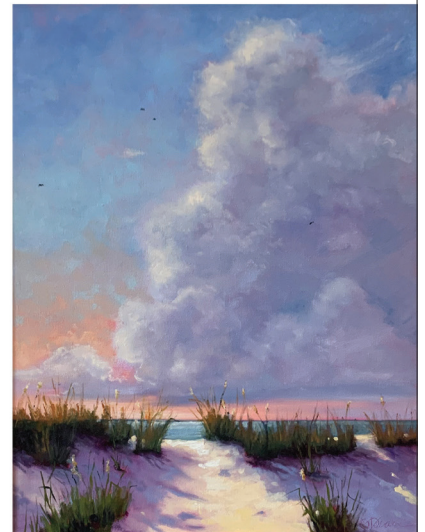
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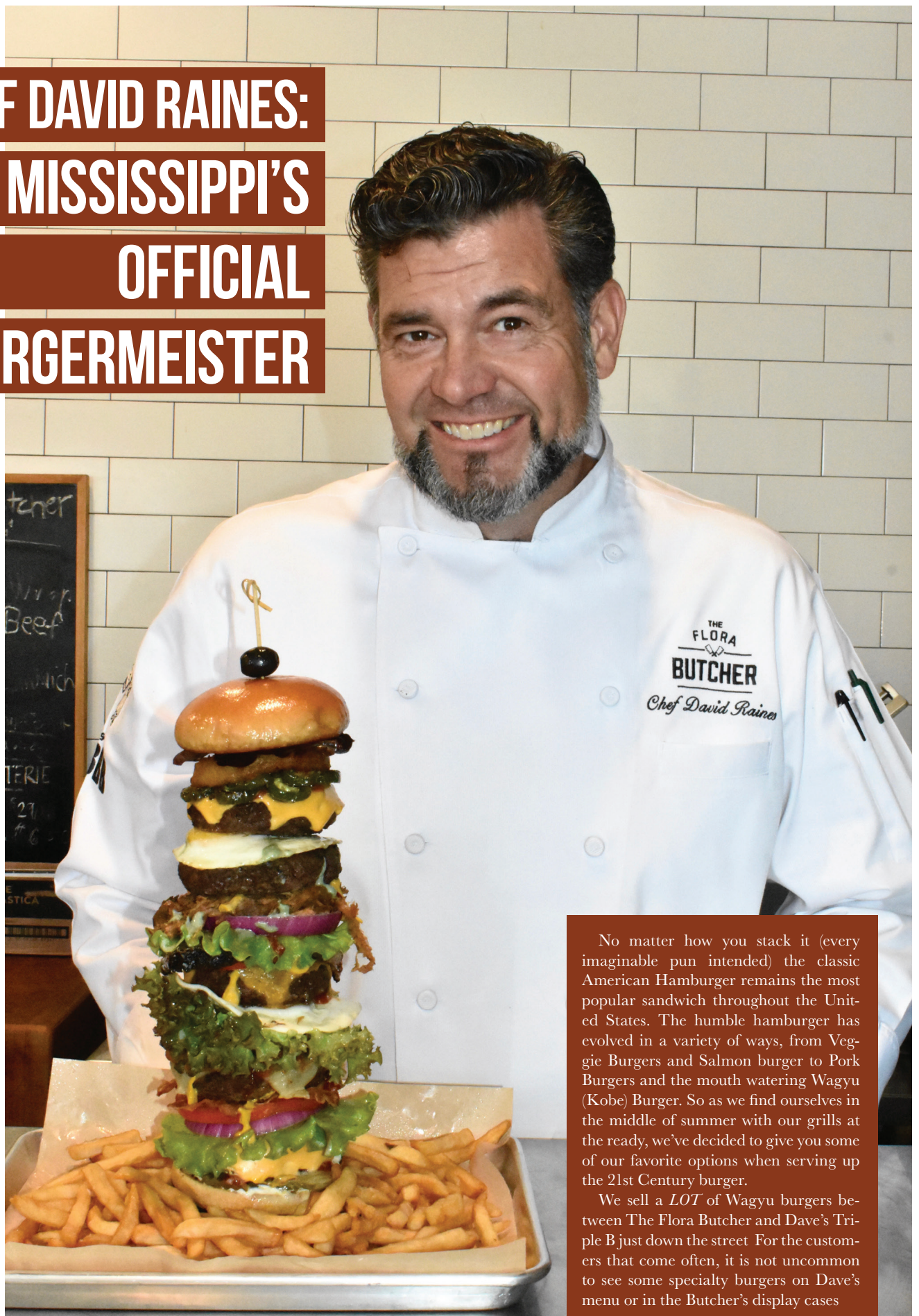
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We sell a *LOT* of Wagyu burgers between The Flora Butcher and Dave's Triple B just down the street. For the customers that come often, it is not uncommon to see some specialty burgers on Dave's menu or in the Butcher's display cases

PORK BELLY BURGER

16 Ounces Pork Belly, trimmed and ground
 1 Tablespoon B3 Marinade(Blake's Bistro Blend)
 1 Teaspoon Granulated Garlic
 1 Teaspoon Onion Salt
 1 Teaspoon Smoked Paprika
 ½ Teaspoon Dried Red Chili, minced
 1 Egg, beaten
 1 cup Panko Bread Crumbs
 Salt and Pepper to Taste

Pork burgers seem to be an uncommon menu item, but we have some patrons who request them in advance. It started with a young man who had an allergy to beef that made him feel left out at the backyard cook outs. We wanted to make a recipe that would give him a burger just as juicy and delicious as his beef eating counterparts. The local pigs that we use are a Yorkshire-Duroc cross out of Moselle Mississippi. We make bacon with some of the bellies, but it also makes a rich, succulent burger when trimmed up and ground. Once we mold the patties, we par freeze them before cooking to help them keep their shape. Grill and then dress these burgers just as if they were beef.

SWEET & SPICY NILGAI BURGER

16 Ounces Nilgai, ground with Wagyu Fat
 2 Tablespoon Uncle John's Molasses
 3 Shakes of Tabasco
 3 Tablespoon Blackening Seasoning (Like Paul Prudhomme's Seafood Magic)
 2 Slices Pineapple, grilled or seared
 2 Slices Monterey Jack Cheese
 ¼ cup French's Fried Jalapenos
 Salt and Pepper to Taste

When we started carrying Nilgai, we noticed that gaminess of this massive antelope went exceptionally well with both sweet and spicy preparations, so we combined the two. Mix the meat, molasses, Tabasco and then half of the blackening seasoning together. Portion them into two 8 ounce patties and then season the outsides with salt, pepper and the remaining blackening seasoning.

Cooking in a cast iron on medium heat or a slightly lower temp for the grill works best. You want to give the burgers time to cook but you don't want to burn the sugar in the molasses. Put the cooked pineapple on the burger and then top with cheese to let it melt towards the end. Add the crispy jalapenos when you build your burger.

JUICY LUCY ELK BURGER

16 Ounces of Elk ground with Wagyu Fat.
 4 Slices Cheddar Cheese
 2 Heaping Tablespoons Hot Pepper Bacon Jam by Terrapin Ridge Farms
 Salt and Pepper to taste

Take your Elk and divide it into two 5 ounce patty and two 3 ounce patty. On the larger patty, place 1 slice of cheese and fold in the corners if it hangs over at all. Add half of the Bacon Jam to the center and place the smaller patty on top. Crimp the edges of the two patties together to seal your burger. Repeat with the second burger. Season the outside with salt and pepper and then cook them as you would a normal burger, adding the second slice of cheese as they get close to cooking through.

LAMB BURGER WITH GREEK TZATZIKI & FETA

16 Ounces Lamb, ground with Lamb Fat
 ½ cup Red Onion, grilled
 1 Handful of Baby Arugula
 ½ cup Feta Cheese, Crumbled
 For the Tzatziki
 1 cup Whole Fat Greek Yogurt
 2 Cloves Garlic, peeled and pushed through a garlic press
 ¼ cup Greek Olive Oil
 ½ Small English Cucumber, peeled and coarsely grated
 Salt and Pepper to Taste

To make the tzatziki, set the olive oil to the side and then stir the remaining ingredients together. Once incorporated, drizzle the olive oil in while stirring and continue stirring until all of the oil is incorporated. Then season to taste. (I like a little extra salt in my tzatziki).

Lamb and Greek Cuisine go hand in hand, in my mind, so that was our inspiration for this burger. We get whole, local lamb from McComb and we combine the lamb with tzatziki and feta. Add some grilled red onion and the resulting burger is a fusion of Mississippi lamb and classic Greek ingredients.

Hold back the cheese until you dress your burger. Top the cooked burger with the onions and tzatziki. Then add the arugula and sprinkle on the feta. Serve them with the top bun on the side if you are cooking for guests. The contrast of the colors and textures is very inviting. (this is also one of the few times that I leave off the pickles on a burger)

SCOTTISH SALMON BURGER WITH CILANTRO-LIME MAYONNAISE

16 Ounces Scottish Salmon, ground
 2 Jalapeno Peppers, small dice
 3 Tablespoon Cilantro, chopped
 1 Tablespoon Chives, chopped
 1 Lime, zested
 1 cup Panko Bread Crumbs
 1 Teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
 Salt and Pepper to Taste
 For Mayonnaise
 ¼ cup Duke's Mayonnaise
 1 Lime, zested and juiced
 1 Tablespoon Cilantro, minced
 Salt and Pepper to Taste

For the mayo, whisk together all of the ingredients and then season to taste. The lime should be very pronounced, but it is excellent when combined with the salmon. If you are a non-mayonnaise kind of burger eater, you can substitute sour cream in this recipe.

This burger is a little different than the rest. I still dress it the same way but the texture changes the preparation method. Once you mix all of the ingredients together, put the mixture back in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Then use a large ring mold or your hands on wax paper to shape the burger mix into three 6 ounce patties. (a set or ring molds is incredibly useful if you don't have one yet) Put the burgers into the freezer for 30 minutes so that they hold their shape and are easy to move.

Par cooking them ahead of time makes mealtime go a little easier. In a nonstick skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium heat and brown one patty at a time as you would a crab cake. Wipe out the pan, add new butter and repeat with the other two patties. Once browned on both sides they can be finished in the oven whenever it is time to eat. It only takes 5-10 minutes at 350 degrees.

I have been a fan of Scottish Salmon since I first tried it during a short trip to a cooking school in the northern Scottish Highlands. The flavor is slightly buttery you can almost taste the ocean when you eat it. It is well worth trying, especially if you have not been too impressed with the salmon you get at the grocery store.

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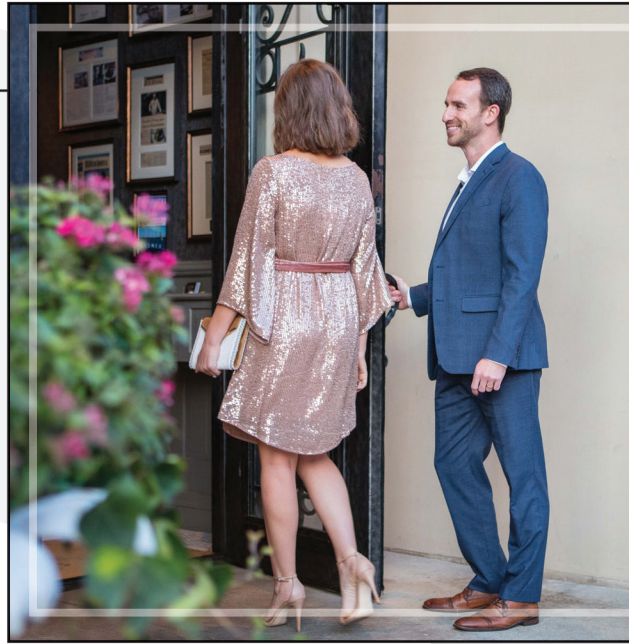
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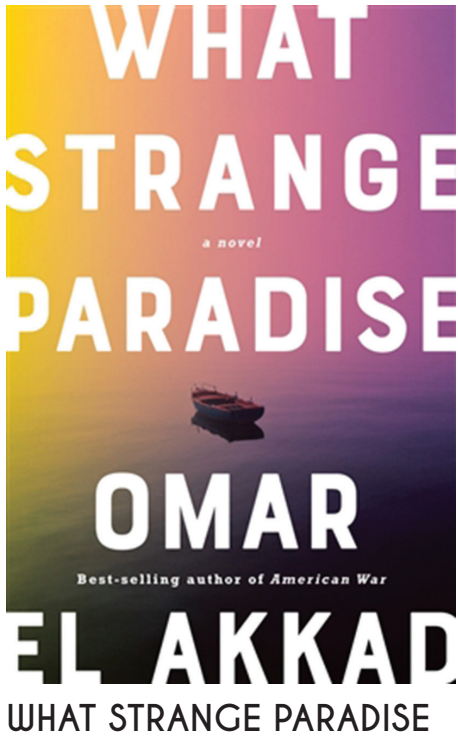
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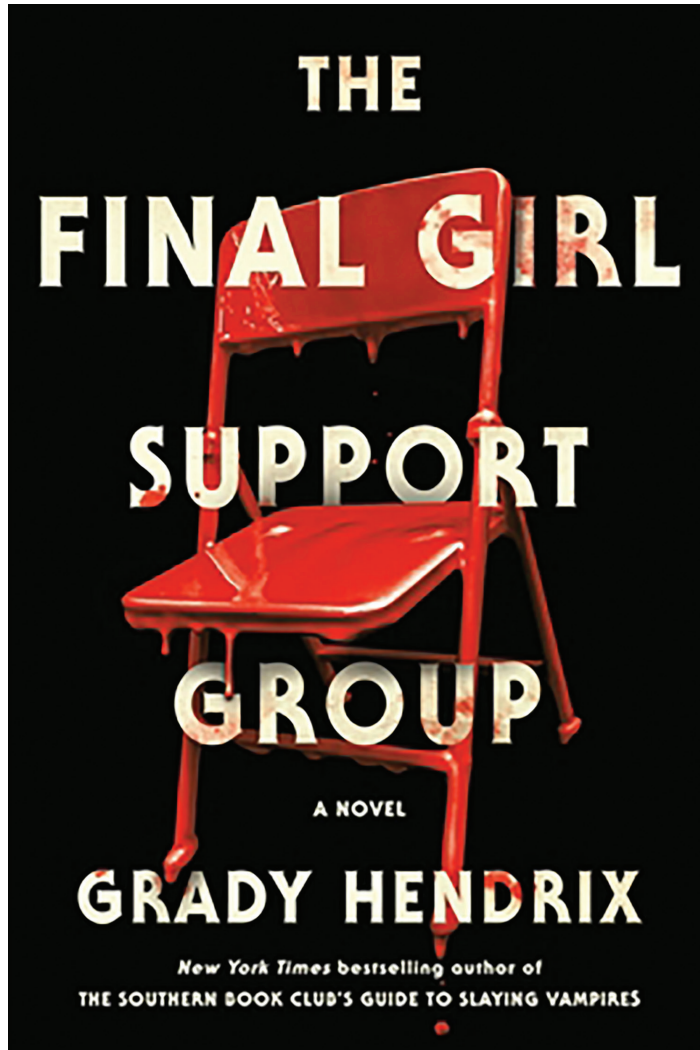


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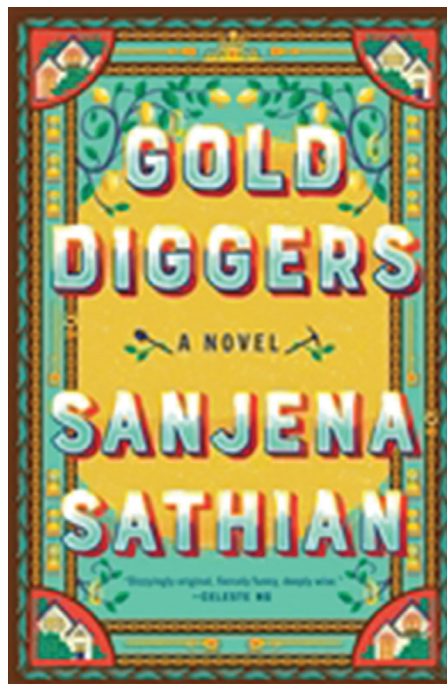
Grady Hendrix is an award-winning novelist and screenwriter living in New York City.



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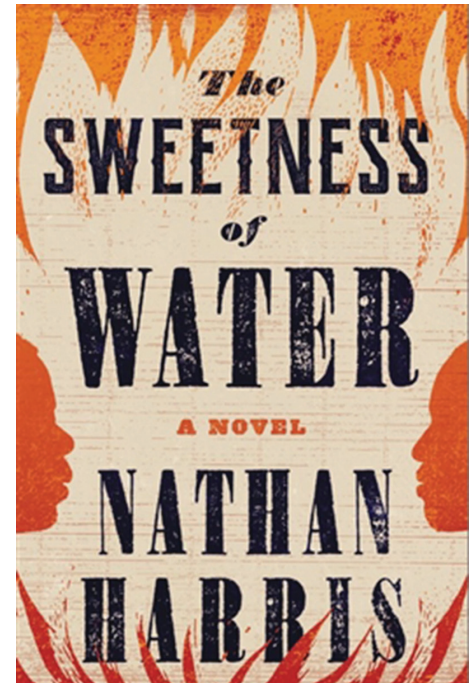
MAGGIE SHIPSTEAD is the New York Times best-selling author of the novels *Astonish Me* and *Seating Arrangements* and the winner of the Dylan Thomas Prize and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for First Fiction. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, a former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford, and the recipient of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.



GOLD DIGGERS

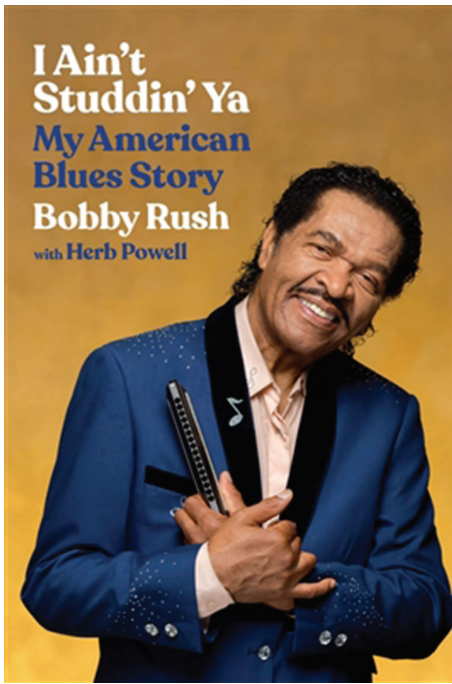
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A Paul and Daisy Soros fellow, Sanjena Sathian is a 2019 graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She has worked as a reporter in Mumbai and San Francisco, with nonfiction bylines for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Food & Wine*, *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and more. And her award-winning short fiction has been published in *Boulevard*, *Joyland*, *Salt Hill*, and *The Master's Review*.



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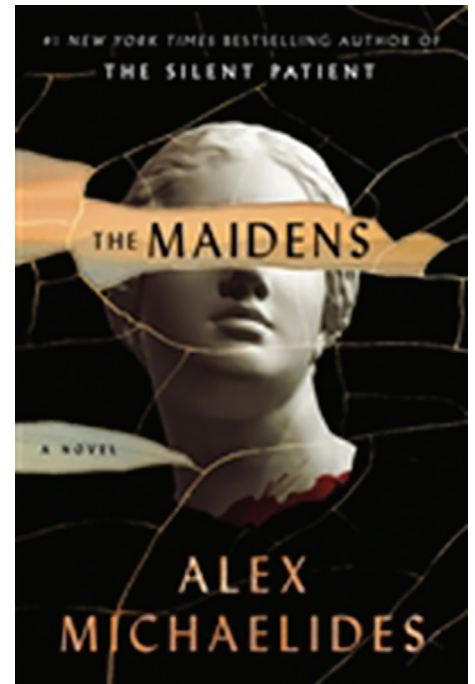
Bobby Rush is a Grammy award-winning blues musician who has recorded over 400 songs over the course of five decades in the music industry. He is a Blues Hall of Famer, a 13-time Blues Music Award winner, and a B.B. King Entertainer of the Year. *I Ain't Studdin' Ya* is his first book.



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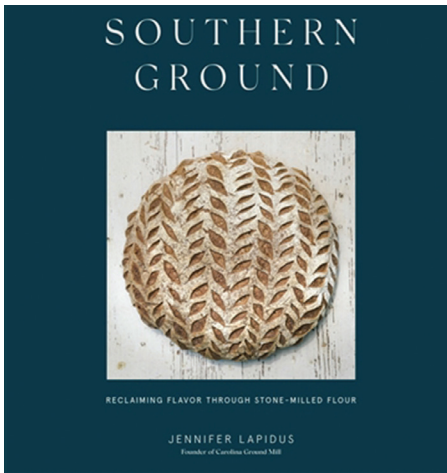
Curtis Wilkie covered civil rights activity in Mississippi in the 1960s and afterward served as a national and international correspondent for a quarter century at the Boston Globe. He lives in Oxford, Mississippi.



THE MAIDENS

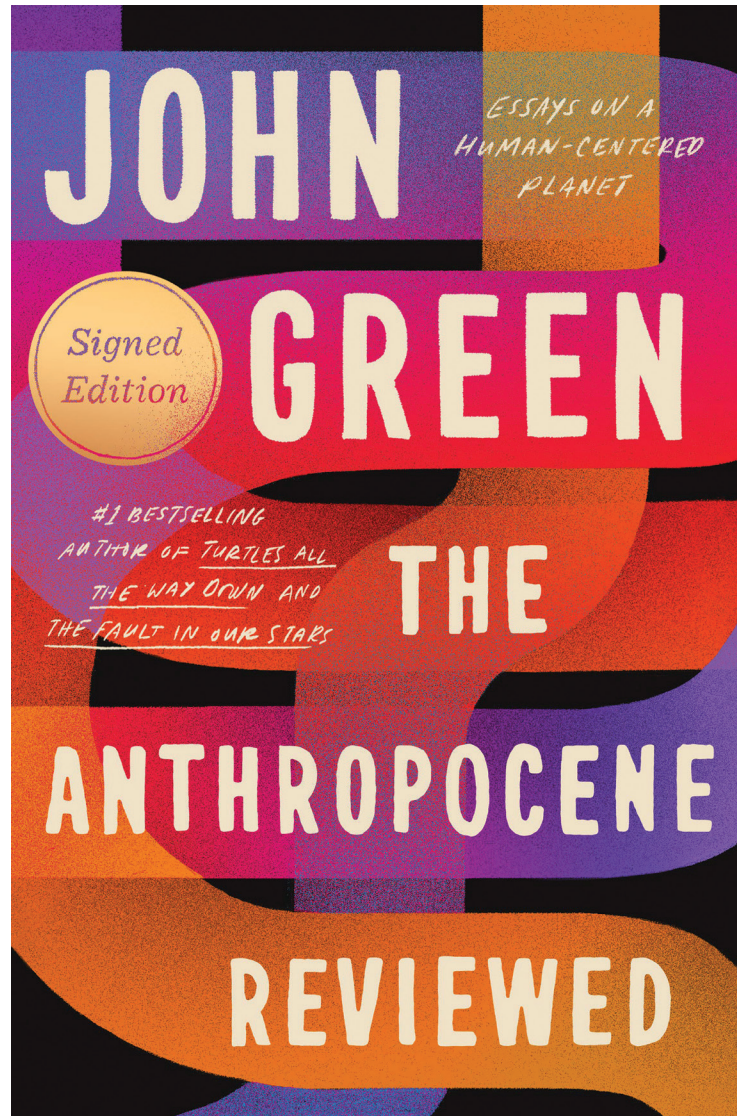
From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Silent Patient* comes a spellbinding tale of psychological suspense, weaving together Greek mythology, murder, and obsession, that further cements “Michaelides as a major player in the field” (*Publishers Weekly*).

Alex Michaelides was born in Cyprus to a Greek-Cypriot father and an English mother. He studied English literature at Cambridge University and got his MA in screenwriting at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He is the author of the international bestseller *The Silent Patient*.



SOUTHERN GROUND

A highly curated collection of 80 recipes from twenty acclaimed craft bakeries in the South that showcases superior cold stone-milled flour and highlights the importance of baking with locally farmed ingredients. Jennifer Lapidus is the founder and principal of Carolina Ground Flour Mill in Asheville, North Carolina. She launched her Natural Bridge Bakery in 1994, where she milled her flours in-house and baked her naturally leavened breads in a wood-fired brick oven. Her bakery was the first of its kind in western North Carolina and was featured in Peter Reinhart's book *Whole Grain Breads*. Jennifer has also been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Splendid Table*, *Bon Appétit*, *Food and Wine*, *Saveur*, *Taste of the South*, and numerous other local publications. Jennifer sits on the board of Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and is co-organizer of the Asheville Bread Festival.



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